

RELIGIOUS INQUIRER.

COME NOW, AND LET US REASON TOGETHER.—ISAIAH 1. 18.

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UNIVERSAL RESTORATION.

In the "UNITARIAN MISCELLANY" for August, there is an able article on "*The future life and condition of Man*," in which the writer considers the four opinions prevalent in the christian world, and gives his reasons for disbelieving three of them. On the subjects of eternal punishment and the annihilation of the wicked, he speaks with much argument and feeling, and very properly condemns and disproves those opinions. Though on these points he adduces nothing new, his manner is uncommonly clear and affecting. On the subject of Universalism he manifests strange mistakes, as by that name he only designates the sentiments of those who believe happiness to be immediately consequent on death. Without replying to his reasonings, or correcting his misstatements in reference to this point, (both of which are well done in the Philadelphia Gazetteer of August 13th,) we shall proceed to the consideration of the last mentioned system, which is that of the restitution. Though it is not a little surprising that a man of this writer's talent and candor should refuse to be called a Universalist, when he has avowed the sentiment, yet we rejoice that he is possessed of light, and sincerely pray that he may constantly increase in wisdom, and that he may continue to use great plainness of speech.

There are three classes of Unitarians in this country; the first believes the wicked will suffer adequately for the crimes of this life in a specific period of the future world, but that during this time, they will contract new debts to justice, and have to suffer another period, and thus in perpetuo; the second, that the wicked will be annihilated at death, or that they will be raised, and punished condignly, and then be struck out of existence; the third, that all things shall eventually be restored; that God shall be universally worshipped, and that man shall be universally happy. The third class includes the larger portion of the English Unitarians, and, as we believe, the majority of their American brethren. Although the Unitarians in this country, who believe in the restitution, refuse to be called Universalists, and seldom vindicate the ultimate purity and bliss of the human family, we understand that their English brethren defend the sentiment with much frankness and ability, and that they are not terrified by names. In this state of things, it gives us great pleasure to witness the conduct of this writer, in stating his belief in the restitution, and in defending it with christian boldness, and powerful talent. Hoping the future num-

bers of his work may be devoted to the vindication of God's free, changeless and impartial love to man, we thank him for this essay, and tender him our most cordial felicitations.

EXTRACTS.

The remaining doctrine is that of *Universal Restoration*. It is founded on our most enlightened and enlarged conceptions of the attributes of God, of his moral government, and of the faculties and capacities of man; and on grounds thus immovable it affirms that not one human being will be finally lost; that the wicked will be subjected hereafter to such punishment as a just Deity shall determine to be best adapted to their state; and that they will at last be reclaimed to virtue and happiness. We are inevitably led to these conclusions by the following train of thought. If all men were created by an intelligent being, every man must have been created for some purpose and with some design. If that being is good as well as intelligent, his purposes and designs must be benevolent, and benevolent with regard to each individual creature. If he is also wise, he will adopt the best means to bring his merciful designs and purposes to pass. And if he is all powerful, he will conduct those means to their end. The final happiness, in short, of all mankind, was designed by the goodness, is planned by the omniscience, and will be accomplished by the omnipotence, of Him who gave them life.—The present system of things with which we are connected, as it is administered by the same infinite Being, is, we must believe, the best. Sin and misery, to a large amount, are permitted to form a part of it. Sin proceeds from evil dispositions or perverted judgment, and invariably produces pain. Pain is employed in return, to correct the evil dispositions or false judgments which first produced it. In many cases it thoroughly performs this office here. In many others it does not. The sinner lives on, adds crime to crime, strengthens his bad habits, cherishes his evil dispositions, despises chastisement, becomes hardened in iniquity, and then he dies. He enters the second life with the same character which was with him when he left the first. That character must be changed; for he was designed to be happy, and he must be happy. Pain is again employed. He is punished severely and long, because the character which he has acquired, calls for such discipline to reform it. Of what nature precisely this punishment is, and where it is inflicted, we do not know, nor is it necessary that we should. But correction will always be its object, and the object will at length be effected. The deaf ear will at length be opened, and the blind eye will receive its sight. The flinty heart will at length be smitten, and from it will gush out the waters of contrition and repentance. The obstinate sinner will at length be brought to a sense of his guilt, and to a just estimation of the beauty, the benefits, the delights, of virtue. New feelings will spring up in his bosom; new joys will be experienced and appreciated; new habits will be formed, and new pursuits commenced; he will loathe his past pleasures, forsake his old ways, and return again to the Lord, who will have mercy upon him, and to our God, who will abundantly pardon him.

While the wicked are thus gradually, and through the fires of suffering, led back to holiness and the favour of

God, it is my belief that they who died the death of the righteous, and began the second life in purity and honour, will be continually advancing in goodness, enlarging their capacities, and strengthening their powers, and rising in the scale of being, and making advances in knowledge, of which at present we can form no conception. Thus, although they who have been wicked, may, on their change of character, associate freely with those who have always been holy, yet the latter will forever be foremost in glory and enjoyment and the former will forever have reason to mourn over privileges abused, and time and opportunities irrevocably lost.

I will now attend to those passages of scripture which have been supposed to militate against the views just presented, and to establish the doctrine of eternal punishment. These passages are urged with much confidence, and, by those who have but a superficial acquaintance with scripture phraseology, are supposed to be conclusive and unanswerable. It will not take long, however, to show that they do not in reality afford the testimony which they have been thought to give, and that they are in no degree hostile to the doctrine of final and universal restoration.

The greatest stress has been laid on those passages in which the words *everlasting*, *eternal*, and *forever*, are applied to the punishment of the wicked. Previously to their examination, it may be well to observe, that they are by no means so numerous as is generally imagined. There are *two* in the Old Testament; three in Matthew; one in Mark; one in the epistle to the Thessalonians; three in Revelations; one in the epistle of Peter; and *two* in the epistle of Jude.—Some people speak as if the Bible was full of them; but it seems that there are but thirteen in both the Old and New Testaments. The question is not, however, how many there are, but whether there be *any*, which teach the doctrine in question. If it can be proved, that the Greek word translated *everlasting*, *eternal*, and *forever*, is not always used in the scriptures to express that unlimited duration which is signified by the English words, the controversy, on this ground, is at an end. Nothing can be more clearly established than that this word is used in a majority of instances to express a limited duration. But a few instances will be sufficient. Examine, therefore, the following texts.

In Eccles. i. 4, it is said, "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth forever."—The earth is not eternal; it is more lasting than the generations of men, which come and go on its surface; but it will not last forever.

John viii. 35. "The servant abideth not in the house forever; but the son abideth forever." That is to say, the residence of a son in the house is more permanent than that of the slave.

The common translation of Dan. xii. 3, is, "and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever." But the literal rendering is as follows; "and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars through the ages, and further." As we cannot with any propriety say, *through eternity, and still further*, the limited meaning of the Greek word is evident.

Gen. xvii. 8. "And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession." The land of Canaan has long since been wrested from the seed of Abraham.

But as strong a case as can be adduced is Exod. xl. 15, compared with Heb. vii. 12. In the former verse are these words; "And thou shalt anoint them as thou didst anoint their father, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office; for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood." In the other verse we read thus; "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law." How could a priesthood which was really *everlasting*, be changed? It is obvious that the

Greek has not the entire force of the English word—that it means *long enduring, lasting*, but not necessarily *eternal*.

The only objection which can be made to this interpretation, in reference to the punishment of the wicked, is, that the same word is applied by our Saviour to the punishment of the wicked and the happiness of the righteous; of which the following passage from Mat. xxv. 46, is given as an instance. "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal." It is argued that if the punishment is temporary, the happiness must be so too; and then where is our hope of eternal life?

The obvious answer to this is, that as the word does not of itself settle the precise duration of the punishment or the happiness, but only asserts that it shall be for a very long period, we are not to seek from this verse, as it stands by itself, a proof of the absolute eternity of either. One thing is certain, that it does not prove an eternity of misery; especially as the word which is applied to the wicked signifies *corrective punishment*, and cannot of course be eternal. Happiness is the design and end of God's creation and government; misery is not. The first is eternal in its nature; the last is not. The object of punishment is the production of virtue and enjoyment—and there the misery ends. But when the effect is produced, why should it ever cease? There is no reasonable fear that the happiness, which lives in heaven, will ever die.

We see that the word to which the epithet *everlasting* is attached, may determine the meaning of that epithet.—Lest some should still doubt, we will quote a passage from scripture in which this is the case beyond all question.

Hab. iii. 6. "And the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow; his ways are everlasting." The mountains are not truly everlasting; the ways of God are strictly so.

As there is nothing in Scripture to countenance the doctrine of eternal misery, the arguments against it remain untouched.

The advocates of Universal Salvation, adduce those texts which affirm that God is good to *all*, that his mercy is over *all*, and that he gives life to *all*, as evidences of the truth of their doctrine. Here can be no controversy. Far be it from us to doubt the infinite mercy of Jehovah. I only say, that it is by chastising and reforming the guilty, that he manifests his goodness and his love. "Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth."

All such passages, however, are decidedly opposed to the doctrines of eternal misery, and protracted misery terminated by annihilation; and are directly in favour of the doctrine of final restoration.

Those passages which affirm that we shall be rewarded according to our works, and according to the deeds done in the body, imply that there will be hereafter a just gradation of moral rank, of discipline, of punishment and enjoyment.

In conclusion, I will say a few words on the comparative moral efficacy of the four systems which have now been discussed. In doing this it is necessary that the natural efficacy of a doctrine should not be confounded with its actual effects. There are so many counteracting influences in human life, and in the human heart, against the bad tendencies of bad opinions, that we cannot determine from the opinion alone, what the conduct of the individual who embraces it will in reality be. But we have a right to affirm, from the unalterable nature of the opinion, what its effects might very well be; and our own observation will show to us what they often are.

Let us then look back on the two first doctrines, that of eternal punishment, and that of long protracted punishment terminated by annihilation. What would be the most natural effects of such gloomy notions? Surely the utmost alarm and terror—terror so deep, constant and pa-

pable, that the common concerns of life would be forgotten, and its necessary duties neglected. The most anxious solicitude would reign in the mind of every one, not only for himself but for all those whom he loved—a solicitude, never to be appeased or diminished; for how could he pretend to say that either he or they would escape the irretrievable doom, the everlasting, hopeless damnation? A settled darkness, darker than night, would fall down upon his soul, which might terminate in the utter extinction of mental light, in melancholy and in madness.—It would be still more inevitably thus, if the believer in either of these doctrines was also a believer in the doctrine of election. What could be the consequence to him but continual agitation and ultimate despair, if, while he was sure that unless elected he could not possibly be saved, he was also certain that he had never received the assurance of his election, and doubtful whether he ever would?—But you will say, these are not the actual effects of these doctrines. And the reason, I answer, is this, that by the greater part of those who will declare to you that they believe them, they are not truly and practically believed. I require no stronger proof of this, than to hear, as I have heard, a preacher set forth the never ending torments of the wicked or the non-elect, with all the eloquence and pathos, and high colouring, of which he was master, and even go so far as to describe the places where various theologists had fixed the scene of punishment, as for instance the mighty furnaces of the sun, or the vast caverns of the scorched and desolated earth; to hear all this, I say—and then to look round on the congregation;—are they dissolved in tears, and trembling with horror, and is fear and dismay painted on every countenance?—They are sitting as calm and as unconcerned as if the preacher had been discoursing on the slighted topics of charity and brotherly love. They do not believe it; whatever they may think or assert, they do not in fact believe it. There is something in their hearts, which whispers to them that it cannot be true. And even if they do in a certain degree believe this doctrine, they are generally careful to put out of the circle of its application, themselves and all their friends.—But then again there are some minds, on which these opinions do exert their natural influence. Where is the lunatic asylum, within whose retreats there does not mope the victim of religious melancholy? And when does a month pass by, in which the newspapers do not tell before the world some dreary tale of some wretched being, as inoffensive a one perhaps as ever breathed, who, tortured beyond endurance by fears for the eternal welfare of his soul, has terminated a season of frenzy by self destruction and blood? Alas, that such things should be!

Of the moral efficacy of the doctrine which I have been maintaining, I can speak with confidence. What opinion can be more favourable to virtue, than a conviction that no virtuous action shall lose its reward; that what is now gained will never be lost; that a moral and intellectual advantage now gained is an advantage to be always retained; that the soul will continue to rise nearer and still nearer to perfection, and that the stores of eternity and the universe will be unlocked, to satisfy its desires forever!

To the idle and the vicious, its warnings are awfully impressive. It denounces against them a full retribution. It gives no hope of escape;—and though it promises forgiveness to their amendment, it declares to them that they have brought down a heavy punishment on their own heads, and that they have degraded themselves in the vast creation.

“With a solemnity peculiar to itself,” and I am now using the words of an eloquent writer* on this subject, “With a solemnity peculiar to itself, it assures the wicked that they can enjoy no rest; that they must be miserable as long as they are criminal;—and if there be any thing affecting in tenderness, or persuasive in benignity, that

doctrine must have a peculiarly moral tendency, which inculcates, that the suffering they endure will induce an abhorrence of its cause, and that, purified from sin, repentant and reclaimed, in love with holiness and goodness, and looking with humble, penitent, and supplicating hearts to the Father of mercies for forgiveness, he will have compassion upon them, speak to them the words of peace, and take them to his bosom as his children; that even as a father pitith his children, so the Lord will have compassion upon them that fear him, knowing their frame, and remembering that they are but dust.—‘I have taken no pleasure in your suffering,’ may we conceive our heavenly Father to say to his penitent children, when the discipline under which he has placed them shall have accomplished its design. ‘I have chastised you only with a view to correct the evil which was in you. You feel and deplore your error. You are fitted to partake of true happiness. Come then, for there is room. This my son was dead, and is alive again, was lost, and is found.’

“If at that moment, this reclaimed child should have the feelings of a man, and testify in human language the sensations of his soul, will he not fall down before this most lovely Being, and, in a rapture of adoring gratitude, exclaim—‘Thy wisdom and thy goodness have prevailed! With penitence I return unto thee, from whom I ought never to have departed! Father, receive thy child. The eternity of happiness thou givest me shall speak thy praise?’”

FOR THE RELIGIOUS INQUIRER.

COPY OF A LETTER TO A YOUNG CONVERT.

Sept. 1823.

Dear Sir,—I am happy to hear that you have recently entertained a hope in Christ, believing that he is the Saviour of your soul from that unceasing misery, which is said (by some) to await the children of men, and I sincerely wish, that not only you, but every person on earth might enjoy such a glorious belief; for a person that has no hope of eternal life, but who views the author of his being as his greatest enemy, full of wrath and vengeance, ready to burst upon him, and sink him into immediate and interminable despair, must be an unhappy person indeed. But there are not many persons in this situation to be found, except where there are awakenings or revivals of religion; (so called) because people are generally inspired with a belief that God is good to all, that He is a kind father and protector of his tender offspring for time and eternity. This, good men generally believe, until they are led by the traditional doctrines of men to imagine and believe that God is their enemy and destroyer; that they are totally depraved by nature, and incapacitated to do a good action, or think a good thought; that their very nature is enmity to God, and adverse to all good, and prone to all that is evil, and yet, unless they perform certain acts of their own, which may induce God to love and save them, (which is impossible in a state of total depravity.) God will cast them off, and send them immediately to endless horror and despair. Now when any are brought to believe these absurdities, they consequently are filled with that fear that hath torment. They are brought into a dark and distressed condition, until the God of love appears, and shews them that he is not their enemy, but their everlasting father and friend. This then makes them rejoice, in view of life and immortality. Now sir, it appears to me, that those preachers, who teach the doctrine that God is the enemy and destroyer of his own offspring, to produce awakenings and reformations, are rather the ministers of the letter, and not of the spirit of Christ; for such preaching, instead of producing the fruits of the spirit, which are love, joy, peace, kindness, long suffering, temperance, patience, meekness, only alarms the people,

*Smith's Illustrations of the Divine Government.

by making the character of God appear as dreadful and odious as possible ; while the God of love is saying to the afflicted souls, it is I, be not afraid, for I will not cast off forever, though I cause grief, yet will I have compassion according to the multitude of my mercies, for I do not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men. Now is it not charging our Maker with duplicity to say, that he leads man first to believe that there is no mercy for him, and then shews him mercy in a miraculous manner ? I say, to suppose that God awakens the minds of men by informing them that he is their inveterate enemy, that he has no love nor mercy for them, and determines to afflict them with endless torment as a just recompence for their sins, —when at the same time he is determined that the same persons should escape endless torment, and be happy, is a palpable absurdity, and an impeachment of the divine character. It appears obvious to me, that the spirit which informs a person that he is an heir of Christ, and makes him rejoice in view of eternal life, is the spirit of God, and that the spirit which declares the opposite, is the spirit of antichrist ; for, saith the apostle, "the goodness of God leadeth to repentance," not the threatenings of endless wrath. I am no enemy to reformation, no by no means ; it gives me emotions of the greatest pleasure to see people reforming, and it is a matter of the deepest regret, that I behold people involved in all kinds of intemperance and superstition, whereby society is greatly injured, and families made wretched ! A reformation of such characters is highly desirable, but a reformation, that originates only from a fear of endless misery, very seldom improves the morals of mankind. It as often serves to make the virtuous more vicious, as the vicious more virtuous ; this will appear evident from a moment's reflection. For those preachers, who are engaged in these awakenings or revivals, boldly assert, that the most wicked and vicious part of society is as likely to escape punishment and be saved, (by a just God) as the most moral and virtuous men in the universe, yea, & some times more so. They frequently say that the most moral and upright, the most honest and industrious die in sin, and are sent to endless perdition, while the most abandoned and incorrigible characters of community are arrested, and received to the mansions of eternal bliss. Now I ask what good can be produced from such nonsense as this ? What person will reform his life ? What encouragement is this to promote temperance, morality and industry ? None at all ! It is a subversion of truth, and an introduction to all kinds of licentiousness.

You, no doubt, have discovered by what I have written, that I do not believe in the unmerciful doctrine of endless misery, for I view that as useless and unreasonable, as it is undesirable ; I believe with the apostle, that he that is dead is freed from sin, that the dust returns to dust again, and the spirit, or soul, to God who gave it ; consequently it must be happy.

I cannot close this letter without referring you to those important words of our Saviour, "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them," now by this I understand, that if you would have men charitable towards you, you must have charity for them ; if you would have all men believe that God has made you a partaker of eternal life, you must believe that he will make all men partakers of the same, in due time ; if you would have all men pray for your salvation in faith, you must pray in faith for the salvation of all men ; having this view of the subject, you may with propriety call on all men to look to Christ and be saved, for saith God, look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else ; I have sworn by myself, the word has gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear, surely shall say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength. Sir, these observations are not made with a design to disturb your feelings, nor damp your zeal in religion, but only to caution you not to mistake the

doctrines of men for those of the Bible, which are, deal justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God. I conclude, hoping that what I have said will not be deemed by you wholly destitute of religion and morality.

Yours in sincerity and truth,

M****.

FOR THE RELIGIOUS INQUIRER.

NO. 2.

It is evident that the design of the connexion between sin and misery, is to convince the transgressor of the evil consequence of sin, and to reclaim him from its practice ; consequently, *good* to the transgressor is the object of this connexion. Hence, we argue that misery cannot be endless—for if it be, the object of connecting sin with misery, viz. the reformation of the sinner, could never be realized. If misery, as an effect of sin, is to be endless, then the possibility of *good* to the miserable is forever precluded ; and the design of God in such a process is forever defeated.

It is an outrage upon common sense to suppose that afflictions are designed as a mean of good to the sufferer, and yet that they are to be endless. It is either a fact, that misery will continue without end, without any design for good—or that it will be limited, that the good designed may be realized. The latter we think must be the case ; as the former destroys every idea of wisdom, goodness, love and mercy in God, and fills our minds with the direful apprehension, that he possesses the *opposite qualities*. In short, we do not hesitate to say, that endless misery cannot be inflicted with a view to the sufferer's good. If inflicted at all, it must be to the sinner's endless disadvantage ; and that spirit which is capable of inflicting *endless misery*, must be a spirit of *hatred* and not of *love*. Thus endless misery cannot be true, unless God, whose nature is *love*, and who is declared to be the sinner's friend, changes to that of *hatred*, so as to become the sinner's *unceasing enemy*. It is an egregious and very dangerous error, to suppose that the Almighty becomes our enemy in consequence of *our sin*.—Were this the case, the arguments would be different ; but God never was, nor will he ever be any other than the *immutable friend of the human race*.

From this consideration of God, in connexion with the cause of misery, which is our bad conduct, and the design of God, in connecting misery with sin, we are authorised to believe, that no portion of the sacred scriptures can, with the least degree of fairness, be made to prove the doctrine of endless misery. It is of as much importance to us to know the truth, in this case, as it is to those who differ from us in sentiment ; and I trust we should not be willing to deceive ourselves, or others. Were it consistent with my present design, I would explain several passages which are considered obscure and difficult ; but such a procedure would be rather a digression from the subject, and would lengthen the same beyond its prescribed limits.

In short, if we make the nature and character of God our guide in examining those passages, which appear difficult, their difficulty will at once vanish ; for it would be very unnatural to suppose, that the scriptures, being the will of God, manifested to us, should teach any doctrine inconsistent with the will and nature of God. Hence it is obvious, that if the will, nature, and promises of God be inconsistent with the idea of endless misery, that doctrine is not inculcated in the scriptures ; and that the will, nature, and promises of God are inconsistent with the doctrine of endless misery, is plainly evinced in the works of nature, in providence, and in the scriptures ; for this reason we argue, that the doctrine is no where taught in the Bible. It is of the first importance, that we discriminate correctly between our own feelings, and the nature and perfections of

the Deity. If he were like fragile man in his nature and disposition, then we might have some reason for believing in the doctrine of endless misery. And when we so readily assent to that God-dishonoring and heart-withering doctrine, it is from the idea that God in his nature is like imperfect man. Whereas, the fact is, man is hateful—God is lovely; man seeks to revenge—God forgives; man is partial—God is impartial; man is our enemy—God is our friend; man is limited in his friendship—God is universal in his; man is mutable in his disposition—God is immutable in his; his nature and disposition are eternally the same. But when we think, that the *nature* and *disposition* of God are like the nature and disposition of man, we then believe that he will punish sinners with ceaseless torments. From the want of this discrimination, more than from any other cause we think, originates the belief of endless misery. Therefore, it is of the first importance that we should have a correct knowledge of the nature and disposition of God. We should remember, that he is a **FATHER**, a **friend**, a **husband**, &c.—one who will never forsake us; and though he visit our transgressions with a rod, and our iniquities with stripes, yet that he never will take from us his loyng kindness, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail;—That he never does, nor ever will apply the rod, but with a design for the *good* of the punished.

Having thus stated, (though very imperfectly,) a few of those arguments, which naturally arise from reason and the nature of things, we shall now briefly endeavor to point out their agreement with the doctrine, taught in the sacred scriptures.

"We have seen, (says John) and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." *He is the light of the world, and the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not.* He is that true "light which lighteth every man, that cometh into the world."—He came, that all men might believe. "He tasted death for every man;"—and "is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world." God the Father sent him into the world, qualified and authorised him to be the redeemer and saviour of the world; and he according to his Father's pleasure, did come to seek and to save that which was lost, and has left us his promise, that the *holy spirit*, the comforter, shall convince the world of *sin, of righteousness, and of judgment*; shall reclaim us from our wandering; shall reconcile us to God, and diffuse his light and glory, till *all flesh* shall see the salvation of the Lord. John, the Revealer, in his visions, informs us that he heard great voices in Heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever." And he will put down all rule, and all authority, and power, for he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet." *For through death he will destroy death, and him that had the power of death, i. e. the devil, and deliver those who through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage.* Here then, we behold Christ, as the conqueror of death, and him who had its power, reconciling both Jew and Gentile in one body on the cross, and bringing life and immortality to light by the gospel. It was, we presume, such reflections as these which gave birth to the following beautiful lines of poetry, with which we close this communication.

• Thus heavenward all things tend; for all were once Perfect, and all must be at length restored.
So God has greatly purposed, who would else In his dishonored works himself endure dishonor, And be wronged without redress.
Come then, and added to thy many crowns, Receive yet one, the crown of *all the earth*;
Thou, who alone art worthy. It was thine By ancient covenant, ere nature's birth;

And thou hast made it thine by purchase since, And overpaid its value with thy blood."

Z. F.

RELIGIOUS INQUIRER.

SATURDAY, September 4, 1824.

In taking charge of the **INQUIRER**, the Editor considers it proper to say a few words concerning the principles on which it is to be conducted, and the purpose to which its columns are to be devoted. It is to be conducted on the principles of God's benevolence to the human family, manifested in creation, providence and redemption, and which "from seeming evil educes good, and better thence again, and better still, in infinite progression." It will state and prove that God's love is unpurchased, changeless, operative and effectual; that it embraces all the creatures he has formed, and that its ultimate object is his glory, or their happiness. On these broad and benign principles it will "assert eternal providence, and justify the ways of God to man." God, revealed in the scriptures, will constitute the foundation of its reasonings concerning the destiny and duty of man; though similitudes and illustrations may be drawn from the material world, from the government of God, and from the domestic, social and civil relations of man. In examining this important doctrine, establishing its truth and showing its purifying influence, the Editor will avail himself of the modern lights of science, the improvements in biblical criticism and the concessions all sects have made, under the humanizing power of christianity.

The Inquirer is to be devoted to the exhibition of God's moral character, that men, seeing it in a clear and amiable light, may be induced to repent of their sins, and turn to God with their whole souls; as his goodness leads to repentance, and as a knowledge of him is eternal life. The inseparable connexion between crime and punishment, between religion and happiness, between love to God and love to man will be constantly maintained, that men may worship God with love and sincerity of heart, love their friends and enemies as themselves, and prove by well ordered lives, and sweetness of conversation, that they are growing into a resemblance of their Father in heaven. In doing this, it may be necessary to present the opposite side of the case, that all may judge with fairness, and more highly appreciate the truth, by contrasting it with falsehood. The editor however will strive to examine sentiments, not men, and in denouncing an opinion, be cautious not to condemn its vindicator. Guided by these principles, and with this purpose in view, he will fearlessly defend the honest convictions of his soul, without acknowledging any man as master, or considering his doctrine untrue, should the majority be against him.

The columns of the Inquirer will ever be open to fair and temperate discussion on the great doctrines of christianity; but whoever writes for this paper, should earnestly contend for the truth, not for the peculiarities of his sect, nor that he may triumph over his opponent.

With this exhibition of feeling and purpose, and this avowal of method, which he intends to pursue, the Editor would solicit the patronage of his friends and the public, and the assistance of those who have contributed to fill the columns of this paper in former years.

That God may bless this little work, intended to promote righteousness on earth, by causing it to enlighten the understanding, soften the heart and improve the lives of men, is the earnest prayer of the Editor.

JOHN BISSE, JR.

DEBATE ON UNIVERSALISM.

We have received and read the second pamphlet, containing minutes of a discussion between the Rev. Mr. Kneeland, and the Rev. Mr. McCalla, on the doctrine of eternal punishment, and are sorry to say, that the debate has been wretchedly managed on the part of Mr. McCalla. He goes on in this number, as he did in the first, without paying attention to Mr. Kneeland's arguments, adducing scripture that bears on the point, or showing that what had been produced was not conclusive against him. In one instance he attempts to reason, and strives to show that punishment must be endless, from inference, implication, and contrast; but it is obvious, that unless God has made a law, the penalty of which is endless punishment to the transgressor, all these arguments must be gratuitous. He brings forward no law of this kind, nor contends that one exists, the knowledge of which is unrevealed. In this number Mr. McCalla spends much time in buffoonery, appearing to think that satire is argument, as it is all he offers. Mr. Kneeland adheres with unshaken firmness to his first position; calls for the law of God condemning the sinner to endless suffering; explains some passages of scripture, which his antagonist had quoted, and thereby proves their inapplicability to the subject in dispute, and repels the dark insinuations, and unchristian charges of his opponent in a becoming manner. Mr. Kneeland remarks on the conduct of Mr. McCalla, because he would neither pray himself at the close of the discussion at evening, nor consent that Mr. Kneeland should open with prayer in the morning. In fine, after much beating of the air, much sarcasm and no argument on the side of endless misery, Mr. Kneeland proposes, in consequence of his opponent's remark, that the controversy should turn on the fate of Judas; but Mr. McCalla, paying no regard to the proposal, continues to ramble and lampoon.

We have given the above summary, as many of our readers may never see the discussion, and as they may wish to see a weekly record of the debate, as it issues from the press.

The following is taken from the *Christian Secretary* of August 24th. Perhaps no doubt can be entertained of its correctness, as the Editor informs us that he is *authorised* to say the letter was written at Mr. Crosman's *request*, and that it has received his *approbation*.

CONVERSION OF A UNIVERSALIST MINSTER.

The REV. Z. CROSMAN, who has for *several years* past preached in the new Universalist Church at Norwich, but who for a few weeks had been absent, returned to his *flock* last week, and in a *public* print announced his intention to preach on the subsequent Sabbath; when on the day appointed he officiated, and after the close of the afternoon's discourse, **HE PUBLICLY RENOUNCED THE DOCTRINE OF UNIVERSAL SALVATION**; and stated in *clear* and *impressive* language, that for the last **NINE** months he had laboured under *strong* mental feelings of **DOUBT** and **UNCERTAINTY**, respecting the *correctness* of the doctrine which he had *professed* to believe, and to preach, and that after *diligently* searching the *Scriptures*—praying *frequently* and *fervent*ly for a right understanding of them, he had come to the *conclusion*, that the doctrine of **UNIVERSAL SALVATION** was **FALLACIOUS**, and **eminently DANGEROUS** to the immortal souls of those who place their trust and confidence in its efficacy. "I have," said he, "closed my *last* sermon in this house. I have already preached the doctrine of *Universal Salvation* longer than my conscience would justify. My eyes are now open, and I feel the sting of a reproving con-

science. My errors are *now* plain before me; I can see with unclouded vision the **TREMENDOUS GULPH** between the **righteous** and the **wicked**, over which **NONE** can pass, *except* they repent and be washed in the blood of the Lamb. I *must* therefore **ABANDON** and **RENOUCE** for ever this **DANGEROUS** doctrine, calculated to lead men to follow the dictates of their own evil devices, under the impression of *salvation*, without *repentance*, or faith in the all-sufficiency of the **Lord Jesus Christ**.

I FEEL AN AWFUL CONSCIOUSNESS THAT I MUST ONE DAY STAND BEFORE THE JUDGMENT BAR OF GOD TO GIVE AN ACCOUNT FOR THE DEEDS DONE IN THE BODY, and I fear the precious and immortal souls of many of my hearers may arise up in judgment against me, as the *shepherd* of a *straying flock*." He then commanded them to God, and requested that they would through repentance and the washing of regeneration, look to Christ as the *only* medium through which to obtain eternal life. As he took his leave, he desired them on their return to their own dwellings, to read and meditate on the following passages of scripture. Matt. 13, 49. "So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just." Rev. 22, 21. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still." A.

Though we intend to make no boasting, nor to exhibit an invidious contrast, the following cases are given, to show the prevalence of our sentiment, to evince its power over clergy and laity, and to show, that while we have lost *one*, we have gained *many*.

CONVERSION OF THE BAPTISTS.

JOSEPH ATKINS, a young gentleman of Cambridgeport, Mass. has recently been **EXCOMMUNICATED** from the **BAPTIST CHURCH** in that place, of which the Rev. BELA JACOBS is pastor, for believing in the doctrine of *Universal Salvation*. It is but a few months since he was baptised.—*U. Magazine*, Aug. 23.

MR. STEPHEN CUTLER and MRS. LUCY CUTLER, his wife, who were members of the **BAPTIST CHURCH** in Grafton, Mass. of which REV. OTIS CONVERSE is pastor, have been converted to the soul-cheering belief of *Universalism* and **EXCOMMUNICATED** from the church; though they wished to withdraw peaceably, without having their feelings wounded, or wounding the feelings of others.—*U. Magazine*, Aug. 21.

THE REV. NEHEMIAH DODGE, of New-London, Conn. after laboring thirty years in the **BAPTIST** connexion; sustaining a fair character, and enjoying much celebrity in various places, has been converted to the faith of *Universalism*, and is now preaching that sentiment to his fellow-sinners.—*R. Inquirer*, Feb. 22, 1823.

THE REV. WALTER BALFOUR, of Charlestown, Mass. a learned, candid, and independent clergyman, who has labored in the **BAPTIST** cause for a number of years, has been converted to the belief of God's universal grace, and now publicly vindicates the doctrine. He is the author of a series of letters to *Professor Stuart*, of Andover, and of an *Inquiry* into the import of the words, *Sheol*, *Hades*, *Tartarus* and *Gehenna*.—*R. Inquirer*, June 24, 1823.

From the (Boston) *Universalist Magazine*.

THE REV. MR. MCALLA.

The public attention has, for some time, been excited by the movements of this gentleman, in Philadelphia. We have seen an account of his challenging the Rev. Mr. Kne-

land to a public debate on the question whether the doctrine of endless misery be true; of Mr. Kneeland's acceptance of the debate which was continued from day to day until discontinued by mutual consent. We are further certified by what Mr. Kneeland has since published, that neither he nor his friends were in any degree convinced that the doctrine of endless misery is a doctrine of divine revelation; but contrary to this, we understand that it is their opinion that the challenger was never able to substantiate any thing which is essential to his doctrine, nor refute a single proposition which is necessarily connected with the doctrine of Universal Salvation. As much as the foregoing is well understood by many.

When I was at Hartford, Conn. last week, to attend the dedication of a new Universalist meeting house, in that city, and the installation of the Rev. Mr. Bisbe, I had the pleasure of seeing, among other faithful brethren, the Rev. Mr. Mitchell, from the city of New-York. He showed me a letter which he had recently received, from the Rev. Mr. McCalla, of Philadelphia, which informed Mr. Mitchell, that Mr. McCalla had beaten Mr. Kneeland off from the strong delusion of Universalism, and that he wished to wait on Mr. Mitchell in New-York, for the purpose of publicly refuting him, and of convincing his congregation. When this letter was read in Hartford, I told Mr. Mitchell that it confirmed me in the opinion to which I was inclined on reading this clergyman's challenges, which were addressed to Mr. Kneeland in Philadelphia; which was, that from some cause, the man was not exactly in his right mind, I think Mr. Mitchell and others, of good judgment, agreed with me on this subject.

The evening that I arrived in Boston, I received the following letter, which sufficiently corroborates the opinion which I had before formed, of Mr. McCalla's misfortune.

LETTER.

Philadelphia, August 13, 1824.

REV. SIR,

I have recently had a debate in public with Rev. Abner Kneeland, and as the public generally have concluded, have completely beaten my opponent. I am now desirous, sir, of breaking a lance with you upon some other tenet of the Universalists, such as may mutually be agreed upon, and should like to commence the same in some public place in your city, either your house of worship or some city hall as soon as possible. Will you, sir, favor me with an early reply to this, directed to No. 69, North 3d Street. For my character as a man of learning, I refer you to Rev. Dr. Wilson, and Rev. Dr. Ely, whose sanction in the present challenge has been obtained in writing.

W. L. MCALLA.

REMARKS.

The reason why I publish this letter and give the foregoing information is, by no means, to injure Mr. McCalla, but to prevent, what I am very confident would be attempted, if this public notice was not given; viz. insinuations that Mr. Mitchell of New-York, and Mr. Ballou of Boston, have neither of them confidence or courage to meet this man in public debate, respecting the doctrine of universal salvation.

If Mr. McCalla was perfectly sane, he would know, that if he had beaten Mr. Kneeland, in such a way as to do any good, Mr. Kneeland or his friends, or both would acknowledge it; for what good does it do to refute one in error, unless he, by some means, can find it out? But, if he really believes that he has convinced the Universalists of Philadelphia, that the doctrine of endless punishment is a doctrine of divine revelation, if he had his reason, would he not know that there is no need of any further public dispute, but that to publish these convincing arguments, which have settled the great question in Philadelphia, would silence universalism where ever they should be? But he wishes to dispute with me on some other

tenet of universalism; as if after he had disproved the doctrine in the gross, it becomes necessary to refute it by taking its items in detail!

But after all, if I have not judged correctly, and Mr. McCalla is just what he thinks he is; and if the Rev. Doctors, to whom he refers are in earnest and acting understandingly in this matter, then I would say, let them accompany their champion to Boston and stand by him while he shall publicly refute the doctrine of God's universal, impartial goodness, and prove that the God of all grace is unmercifully cruel, and I will engage, when all this is done, to give up my hope in divine mercy, and join these Rev. divines in the doctrine of despair. But before this, I promise to use my feeble powers to the utmost in defence of the gospel.

HOSEA BALLOU.

SUPERSTITION DEFINED—*By David Hume.*

The mind of man is subject to certain unaccountable terrors and apprehensions, proceeding either from the unhappy situation of public or private affairs—from ill health—from a gloomy and melancholy disposition—or from the concurrence of all these circumstances. In such a state of mind, infinite unknown evils are dreaded from unknown agents; and, where real objects of terror are wanting to the soul, active to its own prejudice, and fostering its predominant inclination, finds imaginary ones, to whose power and malevolence it sets no limits.

As these enemies are entirely invisible and unknown, the methods to appease them are equally unaccountable, and consist in ceremonies, observances, mortifications, sacrifices, presents, or in any practice, however absurd and frivolous, which either folly or knavery recommends to a blind and terrified credulity. Weakness, fear, melancholy, together with ignorance, are therefore the true sources of superstition.

ERROR AND IGNORANCE.

It is almost as difficult to make a man unlearn his errors, as his knowledge. Mal-information is more hopeless than non-information; for error is always more busy than ignorance. Ignorance is a blank sheet, on which we may write; but error is a scribbled one, on which we must first erase. Ignorance is contented to stand still with her back to the truth; but error is more presumptuous, and proceeds in the same direction. Ignorance has no light, but error follows a false one. The consequence is, that error, when she retraces her footsteps, has further to go, before she arrives at the truth, than ignorance.

"A SOFT ANSWER TURNETH AWAY WRATH."

The horse of a pious man, living in Massachusetts, happening to stray into the road, a neighbor of the man who owned the horse, put him in pound. Meeting the owner soon after, he told him what he had done, "and if I catch him in the road again," said he, "I'll do it again." "Neighbor," replied the other, "not long since, I looked out of my window in the night, and I saw your cattle in my mowing ground, and I drove them out, and shut them in your yard; and *I'll do it again.*" Struck with the reply, the man liberated the horse from the pound and paid the charges himself.

A pious man, according to the sense annexed by our Saviour to this term, is one who consecrates his affections and actions to the service of his maker. But in the style of the moral virtues of the 13th century, he was a pious man who deprived himself of his possessions to enrich the priesthood, to build churches and found monasteries.

It has been shrewdly said, that when men abuse us, we should suspect ourselves, and when they praise us, them.

It is a rare instance of virtue to despise censure, which we do not deserve; and still more rare, to despise praise which we do. But that integrity which lives only on opinion, would starve without it; and that theatrical kind of virtue, which requires publicity for its stage, and an applauding world for its audience, could not be depended on in the secrecy of solitude, or the retirement of a desert.

POETRY.

From the Christian Register.

MORAL REFLECTIONS.

"The way of the transgressor is hard."

Behold the righteous man—bow'd down with age,
With care, disease, pain, want, and wretchedness.
Tho' fortune, fickle goddess, frowns severe,
Tho' health decays, and wealth and strength depart,
Still 'midst the thickest clouds of adverse fate
He rests secure, by the conviction blest
That still there is a God who reigns above him—
A God of justice, mercy, and of truth,
One who, tho' misery's hand bears hard upon him,
Will sooth his cares and give him lasting peace
In those bright realms of never-ending day.
Where sorrows come not, and where grief's unknown.

* * * * *

Look now around thee—see yon pamper'd son
Of affluence and splendor—mark his course!
The current of his life glides swiftly on,
Ambition's fairy hopes are realized,
And glory's laurel, or the wreath of fame
Bedecks his brow; but look within his bosom,
And say if it is tranquil and serene?
Say, if he rests on hopes of future bliss?
On promises imperishable, firm,
Made by a Pow'r, supremely pure, and holy?
No; for "the way of the transgressor's hard;"
And tho' the highest point of earthly splendor
He aimed at, now is gain'd—still, still he is
Unhappy—real bliss is not for him;
For that which gives a double zest to life,
And takes the barbed sting of death away,
To him is lacking, conscience spotless, clean,
Void of offence to God and fellow man.

Thus it is ever.—It is not for man
To form high soaring hopes or vain desires;
For the just King of all created things
Can crumble into dust his airy castles,
"And like the baseless fabric of a vision,
Leave not a wreck behind."—But he who would
Enjoy uninterrupted happiness
Must build on a foundation, lasting, sure,
The Rock of ages.—Then let the hoarse wind roar
And the rude tempest beat—secure he lives,
"Unhurt amid the war of elements,
The wreck of matter and the crash of worlds."

Boston, 1824.

MORTIMER.

From the Delaware (Ohio) Patron.

ON THE DEATH OF AN INFANT.

"Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of Heaven."—*Bible.*

HOW calm are thy slumbers, thou sweet little stranger,
Unmindful of sorrow—regardless of danger!
Thy mild spirit left thee as pure as it found thee,
Ere the cold cares of life spread their darkness around thee!

Thy purity own'd not this world of confusion,

Its joys deign'd no relish for "fancy's illusion;"
Thine eye clos'd upon them, thy pilgrimage ended,
Thy soul mounted upward, by angels attended.

Sleep on, lovely cherub! no more shalt thou waken;
Thy body lies tenantless, cold, and forsaken,
No more shall the arms of a parent enfold thee—
No more shall the eye of affection behold thee.

Though now thy frail body in death is reclining,
Thy bright, spotless spirit with angels is shining:
For our Saviour, to us, an assurance has given,
That "of such" as thou art, "is the kingdom of Heaven."

VELASCO.

DIED,

At Maysville, (Ken.) June 16th, MRS. MARY W. WADSWORTH, aged 23; wife of Mr. Adna Wadsworth, and daughter of Mr. Robert W. Ramsell, of this city.

* * * By request of the friends of the deceased, a funeral discourse will be delivered at the Universalist Church To-Morrow Afternoon.

* * * *To Correspondents.*—A number of communications are on hand from "Luther," "Z. F." "Mayhew," and "Abner," to which proper attention shall be paid.

* * * *We must apologize to our subscribers for the inferior quality of the paper on which this number is printed: it was caused by the rain, which prevented our paper maker from supplying us in season.*

JUST RECEIVED,

AND FOR SALE AT THIS OFFICE.

The second number of the Theological Discussion on the Question

"Is the punishment of the wicked absolutely eternal? or is it only a temporal punishment in this world, for their good, and to be succeeded by eternal happiness after death?"

Between REV. AENER KNEELAND and W. L. McCALLA.

Which commenced at the First Independent Church of Christ, called Universalist, in Lombard Street, Philadelphia, on Tuesday morning, July 13th, and concluded on the evening of Friday following. Taken in short-hand, by R. L. JENNINGS.

The work will contain about 250 pages, close matter octavo, and will be divided into six numbers, at 25 cents each, to be paid on delivery, or the whole in boards, at \$1.50.

The following Books and Pamphlets may be had by applying at this Office.

KNEELAND'S Translation of the New Testament,	\$1.50
Do. Columbian Miscellany,	1.00
Do. Lectures,	.75
BALLOU'S Notes on the Parables,	1.00
Do. Treatise on Atonement,	1.00
Do. Series of Letters,	1.00
Do. Eleven Sermons,	.50
HYMN Book used at the Universalist Church in this City,	.75
A luminous discourse on the "Coming of Christ," from 2 Thess. i. 6, 10, by Rev. J. S. THOMPSON, recently of the Methodist Persuasion.	.8
A Discourse, delivered at the United States' Chapel, Springfield, (Ms.)—by David Pickering.	1.2
Sin against the Holy Ghost, —by Geo. B. Lisher.	1.0
Force of Prejudice,	.20
History of the Inquisition,	.12